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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#)
SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2009

In Today's Papers

Erdogan Cancels Scheduled Visit to Athens
Papers report Prime Minister Erdogan has cancelled his scheduled trip to Athens, reportedly over high blood pressure. Erdogan was planning to be among the foreign dignitaries attending the opening of the new Acropolis Museum on Saturday. Papers report Greek TV channels comment the cancellation "came in reaction to Greek pressure" regarding the EU's statement June 11th regarding "deep concerns about the lack of progress in the implementation of the judgments in the Turkish cases of Hukim Gunes, Gumen and Sylemez."

The U.S. May Use Turkish Ports and Harbors (Haberturk)
Saturday's Zaman, Yeni Safak and Aksam report Ambassador James Jeffrey told NTV American troops may use Turkish bases and harbors during a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, which is scheduled to begin June 30. "We haven't come up with concrete plans yet, but we have a great deal of equipment there and some of this equipment will be left in Iraq, some will be transferred to Afghanistan, some may be pulled out and one way to pull it out would be through Turkey," Jeffrey said. "We have various agreements that would cover at least part of this, we have the Incirlik air hub that we share with Turkey. And we would take a look at whether there are possibilities, particularly to move bulk materials out." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak and mainstream Aksam say Jeffrey said technical talks with Turkish officials were underway whereas Islamist-oriented Zaman says the parties have not reached deal on concrete plans so far.

Izmir 'Republic Rally' Held with Modest Participation
This weekend's "Republic Rally" in support of secularism was held in Izmir with a participation of 10,000 - immensely lower than what was at the rally held last year, which was 1.5 million demonstrators. The participants protested the ruling AKP and the detention of intellectuals under the controversial 'Ergenekon' probe in a peaceful gathering, say reports.

Davutoglu: Turkey's Face Has Been Turned to Europe Since The 19th Century
Mainstream Haberturk reports that in a statement to German Der

Spiegel, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said the EU entry bid was Turkey's "top strategic target," and that Turkey has turned its face toward Europe since the 19th century. On a question about Iran's nuclear program, Davutoglu said that "each country had the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful means," adding that countries "had to abide to the agreements against the proliferation of nuclear weapons." "All countries, including Iran, have to win the trust of the international community. We are not willing to have nuclear weapons in front of our door," emphasized Davutoglu.

The Green Intifada (Milliyet)

Media note the street demonstrations continue in Iran despite religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini's warnings during Friday prayers. Mainstream Vatan headlines "Khomeini's Photo Is Burned!" and the article notes, "Demonstrations reach a peak," when, "Friday saw the strongest protests yet in Tehran as demonstrators burned a photo of the successor to the leader of the Iranian revolution." The paper adds that this "marks the first time the revolt has targeted Khomeini." Vatan also reports, "Khomeini took a gamble by threatening bloodshed," and "Mousavi answered that gamble with his own," as he "defied Khomeini." Leftist Taraf's correspondent in Tehran, Tugba Tekerek, reports in "The Demonstrators Won't Back Down," that "between the hours of 21:00 and 22:00 every night people shout from the windows of their homes 'Death to the Dictator,' and 'Allahu Ekber,'" which Tekerek says "was a phrase used during the Iranian revolution to support the religious regime, but it's possible in this case that it is being shouted (in protest) against security forces." Mainstream Haberturk reports in "Our Neighbor Is In Civil War," that "The rebellion started by Mousavi's supporters is growing due to Khomeini's threat during Friday prayers," and "the

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demonstrators are now targeting Khomeini." Meanwhile, mainstream Milliyet notes, "U.S. President Obama, for the first time, called on the Tehran administration to halt violence against its own citizens," and Ahmadinejad answered "Don't interfere in our internal affairs."

In an interesting contrast, several pro-AKP and Islamist-oriented papers blame Mousavi for the continuation of violence. Mainstream pro-government Sabah reports, "Mousavi's criticism of Khomeini is bringing forth an escalation in the events." Islamist-oriented Zaman writes, "Violence returned to the streets when, despite the warnings from the country's spiritual leader Khomeini, thousands of people filled the streets and clashed with security forces." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports in "Ultimatum to The West," that Ahmadinejad "abandoned his silence" and "sent a harsh warning to the West." In addition, the paper emphasizes, "Iranian Foreign Minister Muttaki said Britain has been long trying to target Iranian elections" and "The British Secret Service is in Iran."

Columnists Chime In on Iran

Mehmet Yilmaz wrote in Islamist oriented Zaman: "Protesters are asking for their votes to be counted. However, given their constant clashes with security forces and ongoing vandalism, it is quite possible they will be considered wrong even if they were acting with right intentions. There is no way for Iran to transform into a velvet revolution, but at this point, it is possible that the Iranian regime can take some steps toward diminishing public anger. Such steps should start with revising the regime's current ideology which is based on creating tension through foreign enemies. It is certain that following Obama's strategic initiative for dialogue, Iran has lost its balance which was designed on the threat of war with Israel and the U.S."

Semih Idiz wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "There are more reasons every day why Turkey has to watch Iran closely. Western diplomats, along with diplomats of Arab countries, ask why Ankara acted so hastily to congratulate Ahmadinejad. Given all of this, Turkey is not in a position to properly comprehend the Iran developments. In days to come, the Iranian regime will face difficulty ruling the country. Given Iran's complex ethnic structure as well as discomfort among minorities, it is quite possible that Iran might descend into chaos. The Mullah Regime will either implement a reasonable reform process or will try to enhance its totalitarianism

through their 'foreign enemy' rhetoric. Iran is headed to the point of no return."

Omer Taspinar wrote in mainstream Sabah: "Washington has been very careful in treating the developments in Iran. President Obama has picked careful language when commenting on Iran by emphasizing the importance of 'justice' which has a direct reference in Islam instead of the usual (Western) rhetoric regarding democratic values.

Washington also stayed equal to both sides of Iran and tried to engage itself to either Mousavi or others. I wish Ankara were as careful as Washington, instead of speedily congratulating Ahmadinejad."

Neda, The Symbol of the Resistance (Vatan)

Media draw attention to the young girl Neda's death that has also captured Western media's attention. As in Western media, Turkish media see it as both a symbol of the resistance and a symbol of the efficacy of amateur video postings on the internet. Mainstream Hurriyet reports, "The Revolution Silences Neda," as "Iran is experiencing its most bloody street violence in the past 30 years," and "yesterday the whole world watched as a sixteen-year-old girl was killed" and "turned into a martyr of the resistance."

Mainstream Sabah headlines, "She Died In Front of the World's Eyes."

Mainstream Haberturk notes "the photograph of the dying Iranian girl is a symbol of the rebellion."

'Kurdish Summit' Held at Presidential Palace

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Papers report Saturday President Gul held a "summit meeting" with the NGO representatives from the mainly Kurdish southeastern province of Diyarbakir, in which "solution proposals" for the Kurdish question were discussed. Diyarbakir representatives said for the first time, a solution was "close." "President Gul took the initiative in the problem, which is hope-inspiring," they said. President Gul said, "We must find a solution ourselves. The continuation of violence obstructs solution efforts. Everyone must watch their wording. We are going through a very sensitive period, we have to find a common language," emphasized Gul.

Kurdish Language to be Allowed in Prisons

Mainstream Hurriyet's webpage reports the Justice Ministry sent regulations to prisons that will allow Kurdish inmates to converse with their relatives in Kurdish. The conversations will be recorded and analyzed by a translator. If any conversation is found to violate the law, that person will be banned from speaking in languages other than Turkish. In the past, conversations in other languages were banned even if the prisoner or relative did not speak Turkish. The move is seen as part of the government's initiative to open up to the country's Kurdish community, and as part of broader steps being taken to meet the EU criteria, says Hurriyet.

DTP Leader Ahmet Turk: PKK Ready to Lay Down Its Arms for a Solution

Papers report Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP chairman Ahmet Turk told a party congress over the weekend in Adana that the PKK was "ready to lay down its arms" once a "solution" regarding imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan is found and the PKK is brought under a "civilian project" in which the DTP could also take a role.

"President Gul is good-intentioned, but the AKP government seems incapable," said Turk.

Netanyahu: No to Golan Heights Mediation

Mainstream Hurriyet reports Israeli PM Netanyahu told U.S. envoy George Mitchell Israeli is not interested in indirect talks with Syria mediated by Turkey. The paper says "Hareetz newspaper says this is because of Turkey's stance during the Gaza operations," and "Netanyahu said he didn't want to make any promises to withdraw from the Golan Heights." Mainstream Milliyet headlines, "Netanyahu Opposes Turkey's Mediation." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak headlines, "Netanyahu Seeks Revenge for Davos," in a reference to Prime Minister Erdogan's outburst against the Israeli President during a panel on Gaza at the Davos World Economic Forum.

New Regulation Introduces 'Indirect Ban' on Alcohol

Mainstream Hurriyet and Milliyet report Turkish alcohol producers

and experts raise their concerns over changing the regulations on sales of alcohol and tobacco products to put an "indirect ban on alcohol consumption." The newly changed regulation drafted by the state-run Tobacco Products and Alcoholic Beverages Regulatory Board (TAPDK) that will take effect in July, alcohol products in public ads will not be allowed to be associated with other foods as well as geographical, historical and cultural icons in advertisements. Turkey's national alcoholic beverage, raki, for instance, will not be displayed together with its most popular accompaniments cheese or fish.

Alcohol advertisements will be confined solely for people 18 and older, they will not include sexual and pornographic elements, notable figures as well as those who are withwith the charity organizations for children and youth will be banned in the alcohol advertisements, according to the regulation. The press will not be able to use alcohol advertisements targeting children in their pages. "If the aim is to protect the health of children and youth, then it is a positive development. The new move, however, is likely to bear other implications when some of the government's former implementations such as to impose alcohol bans are taken to into consideration," said the education workers' union Egitim-Sen.

Editorial Commentary on Lifesytle and Booze Sale

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Mehmet Y. Yilmaz wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "The recent regulation on alcohol and tobacco sales is the AKP government's attack against different lifestyles. Banning the sale of booze through the Internet and placing a three-year sentence on the offense is an indication of fascism as well as an indication that Turkey is turning into Iran, step-by-step."

Suicide Bomb Attack Kills 73 in Kirkuk
Media outlets report a suicide truck bomb has killed 73 people and wounded 194 others in Kirkuk in northern Iraq. Ankara offered medical assistance to people injured in Saturday's suicide attack in Kirkuk without waiting for the aid request of the Kurdish administration of northern Iraq, report papers.

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- On Tuesday, President Abdullah Gul will travel to Beijing on a state visit to strengthen the image of the Turkish market and Turkish products in China.
- The ruling AKP's Nurettin Canikli said Turkey's economy has proven it has enough strength to overcome the economic crisis without the IMF loans.
- DTP leader Ahmet Turk says violence cannot help solve problems.
- A new motorway to be constructed in 22 years will shorten travel from Istanbul to Izmir to 3.5 hours.

World

- 21 people were killed in clashes between the police and reformist demonstrators in street unrest in Iran after the elections held on June 12.
- Newsweek: Rather than giving the Iraqi Kurds gas money -- which would bolster their de facto independence from Baghdad -- Turkey prefers to get more gas for the Nabucco Project from Azerbaijan.
- Iran spent nearly twice as much on U.S. imports during President Obama's first months in office over the same period in 2008.

JEFFREY